



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Carol Guthrie
(202) 224-4515

**BAUCUS WELCOMES PRELIMINARY RUSSIA TRADE AGREEMENT,
SAYS ADDITIONAL STEPS ARE NECESSARY FOR WTO ACCESSION**

Senator Praises Agriculture Commitments But Has Deep Concerns about Intellectual Property

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, commented today on an announcement that the United States and Russia have reached an agreement in principle on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

“Russia’s WTO membership on commercially meaningful terms is an important goal,” said Baucus. **“Today’s agreement is a first step in that direction. I welcome the announcement that the United States and Russia have resolved longstanding concerns in the agriculture sector. As I have told Ambassador Schwab, any agreement with Russia must lead to a lifting of Russia's unscientific ban on U.S. beef.”**

“At the same time, Russia must take additional steps to earn a welcome into the WTO,” continued Baucus. **“Russia maintains unacceptable levels of piracy and counterfeiting, and these must be addressed before Congress can endorse Russia’s WTO membership and grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations status. I look forward to working with Ambassador Schwab on achieving measurable results.”**

The U.S.-Russia bilateral agreement focuses on market access for U.S. goods and services. Russia has also agreed to abide by international scientific standards in agriculture trade, including U.S. beef exports. Completing the bilateral agreement is an important milestone, but there is further work to do in the multilateral talks. Before Russia joins the WTO, that nation must pledge to all WTO members to abide by WTO rules, including those regarding the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

Russia is currently ineligible for Permanent Normal Trade Relations (“PNTR”) because it is subject to the Jackson-Vanik provisions of U.S. law, which withhold PNTR from certain Communist or formerly Communist countries. The United States typically terminates a country’s Jackson-Vanik status and grants that country PNTR as part of its accession to the WTO.

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